

# NSSP UPDATE



May 2016

## Welcome to *NSSP Update*

*NSSP Update* provides monthly news updates about the National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP). NSSP embodies collaboration, particularly in the development of its BioSense Platform, a secure cloud-based computing environment in which practitioners can share tools to rapidly collect, evaluate, store, and share data. *NSSP Update* will keep you in touch with the latest advancement in the platform's development.

## Milestone Met!

On March 11, 2016, the NSSP met its goal to receive syndromic surveillance messages, process messages into the new BioSense Platform archive, and push data to an enhanced ESSENCE application. Software developers at Johns Hopkins University continue to update ESSENCE functionality to ensure that BioSense Platform data are processed and displayed appropriately.

## Transition to ESSENCE Begins July 18, 2016

NSSP will begin transitioning sites to the new ESSENCE application on July 18, 2016, with completion anticipated late November 2016. ESSENCE, developed by Johns Hopkins University (JHU), is currently used by many practitioners in the syndromic surveillance community.

CDC has been working with numerous partners to test tools and technologies to support the NSSP. In 2015, for example, members of the community pilot tested ESSENCE, suggested improvements, and provided positive feedback. CDC and JHU are now using this feedback to adapt the well-received application to NSSP's BioSense Platform.

During the transition, six groups (9 sites each) will be brought onboard the BioSense Platform. Each group will transition on a different date and have 4 weeks to complete transition activities ([see schedule below](#)). During those 4 weeks, CDC will help each site make sure data are correct and provide an orientation to the new BioSense Platform tools and resources. Here are the activities planned for each week of the transition:

- **Week 1:** CDC will present an overview of the transition plan and conduct an orientation to Adminer, a tool that enables users to view their MS SQL data. Users can access Adminer to view the new BioSense Platform Archive, which stores syndromic surveillance message data in raw and processed tables, and to view and confirm the facility information available in the Master Facility Table.
- **Weeks 2–3:** CDC will conduct an orientation to the Access & Management Center (AMC) and ESSENCE. Users can access the AMC to set up user accounts and data access. Once accounts are created, users can familiarize themselves with ESSENCE and use it to visualize their syndromic surveillance data.
- **Week 4:** Sites will transition to the new data flow in a production environment. CDC will begin converting legacy data from the BioSense 2.0 front-end application to the BioSense Platform Archive and into ESSENCE.

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When the transition to ESSENCE is complete, the BioSense Platform will contain site data that represents portions of about 47 states and the District of Columbia.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 16–18, 2016**     [2016 NSSP Grantee Meeting](#), Atlanta, Georgia

**May 18–19, 2016    BioSense Governance Group Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia**

**May 31, 2016**      **Call for Papers Deadline, [Public Health Reports](#)**


## Syndromic Surveillance: The Value of Real-time Data for Public Health Action

(anticipated publication date for supplemental issue is mid-2017). Guest editors seek manuscripts that advance knowledge about the uses and value of syndromic surveillance for situational awareness and enhanced response to a broad array of diseases, conditions, and events that impact population health.

**June 1, 2016**      **Webinar:** Orientation to Access & Management Center (AMC) and ESSENCE  
*(Phase 2 participants only)*

**June 1–15, 2016**      **User Acceptance Testing of AMC and ESSENCE** *(Phase 2 participants only)*

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UPDATES

- On 5/5/2016, CDC hosted its third webinar in a three-part series about BioSense Platform Data Flow. The webinar, titled Legacy Data Conversion and Data Transition Plan, explained how data from the legacy system will be converted and loaded to the BioSense Platform. [View the webinar slides.](#)
  - On 4/12/2016, CDC hosted part one of a webinar on User Acceptance Testing (UAT) for the Phase 2 participants. The purpose of UAT is to make sure tools work as intended for routine and specialized tasks and to identify whether improvements are needed.
  - On 3/24/2016, CDC hosted its second webinar in a three-part series on data flow. The first webinar ([view slides](#)), Data Ingestion into the BioSense Platform, focused on how data are captured. The second webinar, Data Ingestion into ESSENCE, presented technical details about the new flow of data, including info about the new Archive Database, and described how data will be extracted from the Archive Database and input to ESSENCE. [View the webinar slides.](#)
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- A network diagram with various icons representing data flow and technology. The icons include a laptop, a cloud, a Wi-Fi symbol, a smartphone, a gear, a magnifying glass, a document, a database cylinder, a cursor arrow, a medical cross, a DNA helix, and a bar chart. These icons are interconnected by a web of thin blue lines, suggesting a complex, interconnected data system or network.



## PHASE III SCHEDULE AND UPDATE: TRANSITION TO ESSENCE

The development of the BioSense Platform has been a collaboration from start to finish. Now, the finish is in sight. Our Phase 3 Transition Schedule below provides you with our expected time frame for transitioning sites to ESSENCE and the activities involved, such as sites using the new tools and applications, verifying accuracy of data permissions and access, and providing feedback for future development.

Every 4 weeks, nine sites will transition. We'll conduct two webinars with each set of sites. The first webinar will be an orientation to the transition plan and Adminer (a SQL tool for viewing MS SQL data in the BioSense Platform Archive). The second webinar will introduce the Access & Management Center and ESSENCE.

We value your time and participation, and our goal is to stay on schedule. Schedule dependencies include confirmation of site Master Facility Tables, completion of CDC's internal system security checks, and site readiness. If your site anticipates a schedule conflict, please contact <http://support.syndromicsurveillance.org>. As always, we'll keep you informed on progress.

A *BioSense Platform Quick Start Guide* will be available to help you use the platform tools. During the transition, the NSSP Team will schedule conference calls to answer questions and share information.

Phase 3 Transition Schedule (updated 5/4/2016)	Week 29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52
	18-Jul — 22-Jul	25-Jul — 29-Jul	1-Aug — 5-Aug	8-Aug — 12-Aug	15-Aug — 19-Aug	22-Aug — 26-Aug	29-Aug — 2-Sep	5-Sep — 9-Sep	12-Sep — 16-Sep	19-Sep — 23-Sep	26-Sep — 30-Sep	3-Oct — 7-Oct	10-Oct — 14-Oct	17-Oct — 21-Oct	24-Oct — 28-Oct	31-Oct — 4-Nov	7-Nov — 11-Nov	14-Nov — 18-Nov	21-Nov — 25-Nov	28-Nov — 2-Dec	5-Dec — 9-Dec	12-Dec — 16-Dec	19-Dec — 23-Dec	26-Dec — 30-Dec
Illinois (includes Cook) / Massachusetts / Kentucky / Arizona / Mississippi / Arkansas / West Virginia / Kansas / Houston, TX																								
Nevada / Utah / New Mexico / Denver Public Health / Riverside, CA / Idaho / North Dakota / Montana / Alaska																								
Stanislaus, CA / Linn County, IA / Santa Clara, CA / Nevada, CA / Florida / Ohio / Pennsylvania / New York / North Carolina																								
Georgia / New York City / New Jersey / Indiana / Tarrant County TX / Missouri / Louisiana / Maryland / Washington																								
Oklahoma / Minnesota / Connecticut / South Carolina / Oregon / Maine / Nebraska / New Hampshire / Rhode Island																								
Boston Public Health Commission / County of Sacramento, CA / District of Columbia / Delaware / San Diego, CA / Hawaii / Vermont / South Dakota / San Mateo, CA																								

Weekly Transition Activities (updated 4/29/2016)		
Week 1	Weeks 2 and 3	Week 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDC presents transition plan and conducts orientation to Adminer</li> <li>▪ Users access Adminer to view new BioSense Platform Archive</li> <li>▪ Users confirm accuracy of Master Facility Table</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDC leads orientation to the Access &amp; Management Center (AMC) and ESSENCE</li> <li>▪ Users set up accounts and data access via AMC</li> <li>▪ Users learn ESSENCE functionality and use it to visualize syndromic surveillance data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sites transition to production (new) data flow</li> <li>▪ CDC begins converting legacy data from BioSense 2.0 front-end application to BioSense Platform Archive and into ESSENCE</li> </ul>

## MASTER FACILITY TABLE UPDATES

CDC takes steps to make sure facility information is accurate and consistently stored in a Master Facility Table, or MFT. The MFT captures metadata about facilities that will enhance a user's ability to categorize and compare surveillance data on the basis of facility properties—for example, by *patient class*. The MFT is essential for managing data access.

This table shows CDC's progress toward standardizing data in the MFT across facilities that input data to NSSP's BioSense Platform. To check a site's progress, match the accompanying icon to the flow chart.



Schedule for Reviewing Master Facility Table (updated 4/12/2016)			
June 2016		July 2016	
Alabama		Nevada	
Tri County, CO		Utah	
Marion, IN		New Mexico	
Michigan		Denver PH	
Tennessee		Riverside, CA	
Virginia		Idaho	
Washington		North Dakota	
Wisconsin		Montana	
Department of Defense		Alaska	
Veterans Affairs			
August 2016		September 2016	
Stanislaus, CA		Georgia	
Linn County, IA		New York City	
Santa Clara, CA		New Jersey	
Nevada, CA		Indiana	
Florida		Tarrant County, TX	
Ohio		Missouri	
Pennsylvania		Louisiana	
New York		Maryland	
North Carolina			
October 2016		November 2016	
Oklahoma		Boston PH Commission	
Minnesota		County of Sacramento, CA	
Connecticut		District of Columbia	
South Carolina		Delaware	
Oregon		San Diego, CA	
Maine		Hawaii	
Nebraska		Vermont	
New Hampshire		South Dakota	
Rhode Island		San Mateo, CA	

## GRANTEE AND PARTNERSHIP UPDATES

The National Syndromic Surveillance Program (NSSP) will host its first **Grantee Meeting** in Atlanta, Georgia, May 16–18, 2016. The meeting will focus on building partnerships. Grantees from 31 state and local health departments will be able to network through sharing and learning. The meeting will include a demo and discussions on ESSENCE, a tool hosted on the BioSense Platform that will improve grantees' ability to share and contribute to local, regional, and national health pictures. Presenters will discuss data sharing and how to strengthen collaboration among practitioners both in public health and in the healthcare system. This is an excellent opportunity for state partners to meet one-on-one with the NSSP project officers and team and to learn more about the NSSP Cooperative Agreement and evaluation process.



## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE UPDATES

Funding announcement CDC-RFA-OE16-1601, National Syndromic Surveillance Program Community of Practice, closed March 7, 2016. A review board convened April 14, with an anticipated award date of May 31, 2016.



## eSHARE EVENTS

- CSTE Annual Conference: **6/19-23/16**  
<http://www.cdseconference.org/2016/>
- PHI Conference: **8/21-24/16**  
<http://phiconference.org/>